

Caer Hill is a hill fort located near the hamlet of Penberry, a Monmouthshire village that itself no longer exists. Its putative dates are 1149-1215. The reason for its final destruction are unclear, and the only records are in references and epistles found in other covenants collections. Located close to Blackthorn, it may have succumbed to the Voluntas-Blackthorn antagonism that marked this period, or to the expansion of nearby Tintern Abbey.

Tegwaret's name apparently means Fathead. From other papers of both Caer Hill and Blackthorn he appears to have been an anti-English freedom fighter, or as Caer Hill's magi regarded him, a stupid bandit. He appears to have died around 1250 after marrying in

Recently while collating a series of older papers from the almost forgotten Welsh covenant of Caer Hill I happened to chance upon the following letter: originally masked by Perdo Imaginem magic, the text was faded in places but I was able to reconstruct the text almost in its entirety. Strangely I have been unable to find any reference to the author or his apprentice in any of the annals of the Order, but it appears to have been written from internal evidence sometime in the early 13th century. It shows the deranged mind of one addled by Twilight: I hesitate to reproduce it, but have decided to do so to demonstrate the kind of paranoid thinking that our forefathers occasionally succumbed to. The text in brown contains the unobfuscated text - the remnant, the hidden material.

Dear Artorius,

Thank you for the missive, delivered by young Percival who arrived this morn. I am glad to hear your time at Durenmar went well, and we are all engaged in most valuable and pressing research. Little has been seen of the immense dragon since my last, though I am puzzled that the magi of Cad Gadu claim no knowledge of the immense creature, given the direction in which it flew. While I think of such things, Tegwaret Penbras has been less troublesome than when you were here; we feel his increasing girth and one too many blows to the head have finally rendered him almost harmless. Percival reports his men are no longer foolish enough to try and trouble Redcaps.

Now you ask me of House Diedne. I trust by the time this missive reaches you you will be far from the Rhine, perhaps already in Iberia. I therefore feel I can write candidly about my somewhat heretical thoughts, but I must warn you to destroy this letter as soon as you have read it. Remember young magus, knowledge is power, but what is learned can not be unlearned.

We all know the story of Diedne, and we all know the tragic tale of the Schism War, and the defeat of that accursed House, who in number represented half the Order of Hermes just under two centuries ago. I say to you, it is a lie, a damnable lie, and all you know as history is but the childish Imaginem tricks of a playful apprentice. There was never a House Diedne, or Diedne the Founder, and the whole story was invented only by my parens parens generation. I know I taught you all these lies myself, for I then believed them myself - "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" as the Apostle says.

So why do I say these things? Because it is true. You have been studying in the great library of Durenmar: I ask of you, how many older texts there mentioned Diedne? How many works written by members of House Diedne did you see? What lab texts reflecting the famous magics of the supposed Diedne lineage did you discover? These magi supposedly made up half the Order at the Millennium - yet their books, research and findings are vanished like a ghost at cock crow.

So where have they gone? Firstly, they may have been redacted, and ascribed to more reputable authors. Assuming that some thousand Diedne wrote a mere three books apiece, that would be three thousand books to alter, erasing all trace of their true authorship, and replacing it with a fake author or real but minor author. Such a thing is possible, but is it probable? Imagine I wrote a book on Aquam now: my references to local waterfalls, to the leap of the salmon, to the dark pool; all would attest to my being the author. If it were ascribed to Abydris of Antioch, would any believe it? Such a process would require a vast effort, all that scribing, indeed rewriting thousands of ancient volumes to make mask their authorship. It is scarcely imaginable. So what happened to their books, lab texts and writings? Of course: the Quaesitores burned them. What a blatant nonsense! Can you imagine any magus ever burning books, books that contained invaluable knowledge, to be lost forever? No, it is a nonsense. No magus would destroy such a trove of esoteric lore. Even if they did so, every book would have to be found and destroyed. Every covenant's library would have to be searched and 'cleansed'; every folio rebound as the Diedne referencing papers were taken out and censored. Yet is there any trace of this? No! We have been sold a lie, a fable for children, to prevent us understanding the true horror of what happened in the Schism War.

The third option is if anything less likely. They say that Durenmar has locked vaults, and that Magvillus and Durenmar have "Special Collections". Oh they do, they do! The thing is those collections are taken up with scurrilous books on the Founder's Lives, and with the Rites of Fenicil. Nothing within them relates to House Diedne, for I tell you House Diedne never existed!

Percival is a known Redcap of Mercer House, Coventry, who was noted for his loyalty to Iudicium of Blackthorn, Presiding Quaesitor of the Stonehenge Tribunal in this period who personally made him a longevity ritual in 1216 or 1217. He died in 1218 under somewhat mysterious circumstances.

Sightings of this immense red dragon are a common feature of the Caer Hill fragments.

Cad Gadu is the Domus Magna of House Ex Miscellanea.

The quotation appears to originate in 1 Corinthians 13:11 - St. Paul

There is some discussion upon the Rites of Fenicil in the first volume of the work upon the Houses of Hermes, wherein the True Lineages are discussed

Val Negra was the first Domus Magna of House Flambeau, reputedly in the Pyrenees. It was destroyed in the final days of the Schism War, and since 1012 its exact location has been lost. Castra Solis replaced it.

His comment concerning the portals appears to be true. The Mercere Portals are discussed in the first volume of the work on the Houses of Hermes, wherein the True Lineages are discussed at length.

Damhan-Alliadh is of course Gaelic for "The Spider". Given Tytalus propensity for scheming, and his disappearance in 807 (traditionally in Maedenhoffen Woods in Germania) one can see how the connection was made.

There is a noted inconsistency in the historical record concerning Pralix's campaign. The early pages of the foundational volume upon the Ars Magica says the campaign was initiated by Tytalus, ascribing this to the pre-807 period. The work upon the Societates of our

Order, however, places these events later, and ascribes Hariste as responsible for sending Pralix, in 813 or 814. Tasgillia was Prima of House Tytalus at the time of The Corruption, as recorded within the common works upon the Societates.

Have you ever been to Branugurix in Normandy? A lonely spot, on a windswept rise. House Guernicus would keep you away, but I tell you why: because it is a fable. It was once a House Flambeau covenant, and I can even tell you the name. Branugurix is referenced many times in our ancient books, but not as Branugurix. The name you will read there is different, but familiar, for in those books it is known as "Val Negra". Yes, Val Negra, the lost Domus Magna of House Flambeau. Have you never noticed that in the lists of the Portals of Mercere, Val Negra has such a portal, yet Branugurix does not appear?

The reason is simple once one stops reasoning like a child: there was no Branugurix. Yes, many authors say Val Negra lay in the Pyrenees region. Note they also say that it lay within the Val Negra Tribunal - and it is commonly assumed that Tribunal is the one we now know as Provence. Nonsense! Provence was then the Lotharingian Tribunal, as any serious scholar knows. The Val Negra Tribunal was the Britannian Tribunal - simply another name for it. Flambeau formed his advanced base here to fight Damhan-Alliadh, who is of course in older texts known as Davnalleous. And who was Davnalleous? None other than Tytalus the Founder of course, after Hariste usurped him as Primus! Hariste and Apromor made common cause to defeat Tytalus, who has taken refuge in the highlands of Scotland. Here they planned the campaign, and they betrayed both Flambeau and later Pralix, whose fury led to the creation of the Ordo Ex Miscellanea in response.

Yes, much of the story of Flambeau, the great Iberian wizard who fought the sahirs is a lie too. My research suggests some is true, a great deal written later inspired by the Song of Roland. He was an Iberian magus; he really did take the famous "join or die" line, and fight Hedge Wizards. Have you not however noted how Hermetic history disagrees as to so much of his life, and especially his death? The truth is he died fighting Davnalleous, which is nothing but a nickname for Tytalus himself; he was betrayed, perhaps by Hariste, as she later betrayed Pralix. However if I was to dwell on the truth about the Founders, no Redcap could carry the volumes I would write!

No, Branugurix was in fact Val Negra: both are said to have 'disappeared' in 1012, and Llewellyn was in fact the last of a now lost Flambeau lineage. The Mercurians and Mithraists claim the legacy of Val Negra: the truth is, both were at the time of the Schism War simply warring political parties within the House, and of little importance. The Flambeau magi of the Pyrenees and Gascony have rewritten their history to cover their same at the loss of their true legacy and domus magna: they founded Castra Solis as a replacement, and have never returned to Val Negra, leaving it abandoned to their Tytalan rivals.

So what really happened in the Schism War? Well some of what we here is true. By the Millennium over half the Order of Hermes was comprised of non-Latin wizards, and these were in fact the magi of House Ex Miscellanea. Pralix had maintained an independent line, and had kept the true vision of Bonisagus and Trianoma alive; a diverse Order, consisting of many disparate traditions, working towards breakthroughs in magical research. Many of the Latin Houses disapproved of the Ex Miscellanea, and Grand Tribunals tended to dismiss them as mere Hedge Magi.

In the late tenth century the tragedy of the Corruption of House Tytalus unfolded. Tasgillia was shown to have dabbled with demons or so we read: but history is written by the victors. In reality she had discovered the corruption of many in House Flambeau, and when a loyal Tytalan maga discovered the Duresca Scrolls, it became clear that even House Guernicus were implicated: and who can doubt House Tremere too? We have all heard rumours of the Duresca Scrolls, but few have noted they were discovered almost immediately before widespread diabolism in House Tytalus was first alleged. Tasgillia tried to warn the Order: the Corruption had spread too far, and she was slain in what became a viscous and ironic campaign, in which diabolically tainted magi engineered the almost complete destruction of House Tytalus. House Flambeau took a great part in this, being practically neighbours.

The conspiracy ended Tasgillia's campaign to bring the Corruption to light, and the Duresca Scrolls became the forbidden topic they are today. The Order of Hermes was by this time riddled with diabolists, faerie imposters and madmen who wished to rule all of Europe as lords over mundane society, enslaving UnGifted humanity. House Flambeau, House Guernicus and part of House Bjornaer were committed to the plan, and house Bonisagus assented as far as they cared. Dark,

Branugurix was considered the Domus Magna of House Dieðne, located in what is today the Normandy Tribunal. Destroyed in the last stand of the Dieðne, the ruins are forbidden to Hermetic magi by the Quaestors.

10 According to most historians by the time of the Schism War the Lotharingian Tribunal had largely been replaced by the nascent 15 Provençal Tribunal, with the Rhine and Normandy Tribunals expansion.

Hariste was the commonly accepted successor of Tytalus as Prima of House Tytalus.

Apromor was successor of Flambeau as Primus of House Flambeau, creator of the Perdo tradition in that House.

Llewellyn is commonly 30 accepted as the last Primus of House Dieðne.

That the Mercurians and Mithraists claim the legacy of Val Negra is true and is described within the work on the Societates.

The corruption of House Tytalus is one of the most famous events in our Hermetic History and has been explored many times, not least within the works upon the Societates and the foundational work upon the Ars Magica

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*That the author believes this vampiric nonsense must give colour to his belief that House Diedne was a fabrication. Any notion that House Tremere became corrupted through vampiric ambitions has been roundly discredited.*

*He also makes much here of the noted antipathy between House Tremere and House Jerbiton that I only learned of through reading the recent gazetteer concerning the Thebes Tribunal.*

*The gazetteer upon the Normandy Tribunal does indeed detail the escalating hostility between House Tytalus and House Flambeau in the immediate aftermath of the Schism War. Though for different reasons.*

*Red Hywel fillius of Cadogan? No magi of these names are known in the remaining Gaer Fragments, though a Cadogan ap Redivor does appear in some Blackthorn documents of the middle 12th century.*

sinister forces arose everywhere - House Tremere was by this time, my researches suggest, dominated by a cabal of Vampires, though of course "we all know" that is just anti-Tremere propaganda put about by House Jerbiton. I think the Jerbiton know the Tremere better than we do!

So what happened? The corrupted Latin Houses, and what we know know as the Bjornaer Wilderist faction too, they all managed to suppress the truth. You can't suppress the truth forever though, and the Corruption of the Order was widely suspected by the turn of the Millennium. While the magi in these parts were worrying about the Red Dragon of the Valleys sudden reappearance, word came that half the covenants on the continent were immersed in endless Wizard War; sodalus killed sodalus, parentes killed filia and apprentices their masters. That is what the Schism War was - not a noble heroic battle against some hellish pagan blood cult, House Diedne, who had somehow survived six centuries of Christianity untouched - oh no! It was a bloody, miserable and violent accounting for of grievances, purging of diabolists, and fratricidal Civil War. It lasted 13 years, and at the end, magi still hated each other, and no one was safe. We were returned to where we were before Bonisagus and the Order of Hermes ever existed. No magus would as much as break bread with a stranger, and few trusted their own covenant mates.

We were lucky. House Ex Miscellanea remained aloof, and we tried not to get involved. That is why they hate us: no they always hated us, but that is why they hate us more these days. Some lineages of our House were destroyed: the Doomed Ones are an obvious example, and you have seen where the last of them fell near Padstow yourself. We suffered huge losses; but we remained the largest House. The largest House, with supposedly pagan traditions - the legend House Diedne is a myth intended to insult us, a warning to us I think, and also to them. The Latin Wizards don't trust us, for we are many, and we thrive in the chaos they fear. So maybe it is an insult; or maybe it is a compliment. Who knows?

It was the Archmagi of Valnastium, the greatest of the Jerbiton, who made the decision the Schism War must end. It required a ritual the like of which had not been seen since The Sundering - all of Europe, and every magus and maga, all to be effected by a powerful Mentem rite. At least I think that is how it was done: it is hard to tell, because if they find out anyone who knows, they break their mind and bland their memory. They cast that Rite, and every magus in the Order of Hermes was targeted by a powerful Arcane Connection, for they used the very tablet on which Bonisagus himself has inscribed the Code of Hermes. It acted an Arcane Connection to everyone who had sworn the Oath, and they used it to astonishing effect. They created that very day the whole story of House Diedne, and the legend of their defeat. They ended the War, and then let the Quaesitors quietly sort out the corrupt magi who were left over.

And so the Schism War ended, as there were no Diedne left to fight. My old parens parens used to say that every magus of his generation used to know exactly where he was the moment the Schism War ended: no one ever forgot what they were doing when they heard the news! What more proof do you need than that, boy? Of course not everyone succumbed. House Flambeau and House Tytalus had a few who remembered, but they were wise enough to keep their mouth shut. The war rumbled on then for a few years, and then the Flambeau left the Tribunal and withdrew to Provence, just like it says in the history books.

Now you know the truth. House Diedne is a myth, a myth invented to cover up the horrible truth. If it does not sound horrible, imagine if you could not trust the Redcaps, if you could not trust your sodales, if every magus' hand was against your throat? There could be no Order of Hermes, no peace. And you know boy, it will happen again...

I trust you are well. Make sure you pack warm clothes for your journey north. I received the Tractatus - a little dry.

Your affectionate Parens,

Coch Howel ap Cadugan

*Document rediscovered and glassed by Chretien de Romer*

*The Duresca Scrolls are described in the now-discredited gazetteer concerning the Iberian Tribunal, an old work now and overdue for further work. A more reliable description is contained within the more recent work on the Order's True Lineages.*

*They are said to contain evidence of Guernicus' secret plan to take over the Order and the World. Given Tremere's open ambitions it is perhaps surprising Guernicus hid The Plan, if it was real.*

*The Duresca Scrolls are a forbidden topic in Hermetic society, and are widely believed to have been faked*

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